

*Maintenance of American troops
in Germany costs about \$875 million
annually. (Cost to US about 50%
of that) 1/10*

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What Is Happening to Détente?

Relations between the West and the Communist Countries

by Richard Lowenthal

1. - Conflict and Cooperation

For more than a decade now, relations between the Western powers and the Communist member states of the Soviet bloc have been characterized by the development of limited but important elements of cooperation along with the persistence of overriding conflict. The conflict, centered around the balance of world power between U.S.A. and U.S.S.R., and involving their respective European allies in various degrees in its diverse aspects, finds its expression in the competitive development of armaments, both nuclear and conventional; in the continuing military confrontation of the rival alliances in Europe and the promotion of rival concepts for overcoming the division of the continent and particularly for the future of Germany; in the expansion of Soviet influence in the Middle East and the increasing penetration of Soviet forces into the Mediterranean; in substantial deliveries of Soviet arms for North Vietnam; as well as in the spreading of rival interpretations of the world scene and rival views of the character of their respective political, economic and social systems by both sides.

At the same time, elements of East-West cooperation have developed both from the recognition of certain common interests by the two "bloc leaders" and from the increasing tendency of the other members of both blocs to pursue their individual national interests independently. A common interest of U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. in avoiding a nuclear world war, and more generally in limiting the risks and burdens of their conflict, has been increasingly recognized by them ever since the Geneva summit meeting of 1955; after their confrontation in the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, it has led to the beginnings of a diplomatic technique for joint crisis control as well as to intensified efforts for arms control--so far largely at the expense of other powers. A second common interest, as yet publicly avowed only by the U.S.A. and in fact given greater weight by them, but not ignored by the U.S.S.R. either, concerns the slowing down of the growth of Communist China's power; this has shown itself particularly in common opposition to China's nuclear armament, in common backing for India against China, and in common denunciation of China's belligerent ideology and propaganda.

Common economic interests are still of very limited importance for relations between the super-powers, but play a major role in the efforts of the secondary powers on both sides to increase their freedom of political manoeuvre by intensified contacts both among each other and with the opposing bloc leader. The tendency of that process, however, is not towards cooperation between the blocs, but towards cross-cross cooperation of individual states diminishing the cohesion of the blocs.

2. - The Precariousness of Détente

In a protracted conflict of which the protagonists strive to limit the forms, it is natural that periods of growing tension, after

culminating in an acute crisis, are followed by periods of détente. Just as during the former the climate of public discussion is dominated by (frequently exaggerated) fears of war, so during the latter it is characterized by (often illusory) hopes for a replacement of conflict by cooperation as the dominant relationship between the two sides. In fact, however, such a replacement cannot be achieved simply as the more or less organic result of the piecemeal growth of elements of cooperation, but requires constructive efforts to achieve agreed solutions of the principal issues underlying the conflict: failing that, new developments that threaten to shift the balance of power will inevitably erode the climate of détente and bring about a renewal of growing tension.

The course of events during the most recent period of East-West détente--the period that opened with the solution of the Cuban missile crisis, with the abandonment of Khrushchev's threat to Berlin and with the test-ban treaty of 1963--has confirmed the above view. Since that time, the climate of détente has encouraged the growth of considerable new elements of cooperation across the bloc lines, and has led to a marked loosening up of the formerly rigid political fronts. Yet in the absence of serious efforts to negotiate solutions for the main issues in the conflict--above all, for a stable, generally accepted balance of power in Europe--new developments in Vietnam, in the Middle East and Mediterranean and in the arms race have undermined the climate of détente between U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. to an extent that is no less real for being still publicly soft-pedalled by most Western statesmen. Just as "peaceful coexistence," in official Soviet terminology, has come to mean no more than the absence of nuclear world war, so "détente," in Western diplomatic terminology, has become depreciated to mean little more than the absence of an all-out confrontation between the super-powers or of an acute crisis involving the two blocs as a whole. Even this sort of mini-détente can hardly be expected to last much longer if the recent trend for shifts in the balance of world power continues.

3. - Major shifts since 1963

This paper deliberately confines itself to relations between the Western powers and the states of the European Soviet bloc, i.e. the Communist member states of the Warsaw Pact. Such factors as the growth of Communist China's military potential owing to the development of a nuclear capability, or the temporary decline of her political potential as a result of the "Cultural Revolution," are only discussed in their indirect impact on the power and policy of the two traditional antagonists.

Within this limitation of our field, we may say that three major shifts in East-West relations have occurred since the beginning of the latest détente. The first concerns the relation of the military potentials of both sides in general, and of the forces available in Europe in particular. The second concerns the relative political cohesion of Nato and the Warsaw Pact. The third, based in part on the former two, and interacting with them, concerns the diplomatic initiative in Europe.

1. - The end of the Cuban and Berlin crises and the turn towards détente were based on a convincing demonstration of American military superiority, both in nuclear striking power and in the mobility of conventional forces. While American superiority in the strategic nuclear field still exists, the trend in recent years has been towards its reduction, both by the rapid growth of Soviet rocket forces and by the installation of at least a limited ABM-system in Russia. The continuing

worldwide mobility of American conventional forces is visible in Vietnam, but the new fact is the remarkable increase in Soviet mobility, as demonstrated not only in the flow of highgrade arms supplies to North Vietnam but above all in the growing activity of the Soviet navy and in the training of ship-based land forces; the rapid growth of the "Mediterranean detachment of the Black Sea Fleet" is the politically most significant aspect of this new mobility. Further, while the proportion of American forces available for use in Europe has diminished and tends further to diminish under the influence of the Vietnam war, the proportion of Soviet forces in Europe has not. Finally, the tendency in recent years has been for a reduction in the military effort of the European member states of Nato, and for an increase in the strength and fire-power of Russia's allies in the Warsaw Pact.

2. - The political cohesion of the Soviet bloc reached a low point in 1964, with the Rumanian "declaration of independence" and the initial shock effect of Khrushchev's fall. Since then, efforts to reduce the degree of independence acquired by Rumanian foreign policy have failed, but Soviet leadership of the other member states of the Warsaw Pact has been consolidated with marked success. The progress of military cooperation, the conclusion of a new network of bilateral twenty-year treaties (to make the continuation of the political-military alliance independent of any formal dissolution of the Warsaw Pact) and the common basic policy adopted, despite differences of interest and nuances of formulation, in response to the West German bid for normal diplomatic relations are striking evidence of this consolidation, all the more striking because they were achieved at a time of increasing trade relations between the East European countries and the West. It is true, however, that this success has been achieved at the price of considerable internal tensions in at least some member states, as recent events in Czechoslovakia have shown, and that internal changes may still endanger its fruits.

Conversely, disintegrative tendencies within the Western alliance have continued to increase. Its military potential has been weakened by the French withdrawal from the integrated command structure as well as by the reductions of the American forces under Nato command and by the lowering of the military effort of other member states. Its loss of political cohesion has been demonstrated by its inability to use the détente for developing joint proposals for solving the outstanding issues of the East-West conflict in Europe and by the growth of a competition between the leading Western powers for improving their relations with Moscow by separate negotiations, culminating in the French attempt to move into a position of mediator between the bloc leaders. This is not just the automatic result of détente, i.e. of a diminished sense of danger from the East, but is largely due to the divisive effect of specific policies or non-policies: the American involvement in Vietnam, leading to the de facto withdrawal of U.S. initiative from Europe as well as to the growth of anti-American currents of opinion in Western Europe; the insufficient consultation of America's Nato allies on her arms control negotiations with Russia; the French belief that an independent Europe under French leadership could be brought nearer by negotiations with Russia without American participation or agreement, and that its chances would be jeopardized by British membership in the Common Market, etc. Altogether, disagreements on the conduct of diplomacy towards Russia, on atomic non-proliferation, on Vietnam and on the Common Market have become much more prominent among the Nato members than their common policies; and while few if any member states seem at present

determined to leave the alliance when this becomes possible in 1969, the growth of influential anti-Nato currents is discernible in most of them.

3. - The net effect of these developments is that the Soviet side-- the side that was defeated in the showdown that preceded the détente-- has for some years now recovered the political initiative in Europe, largely because it has consistently given priority to this theatre over other interests. It is Soviet proposals for a European Security system to replace Nato and the Warsaw Pact, or for some form of revival of the Potsdam agreement for the control of Germany, that form the main material for diplomatic discussion in allied and neutral European capitals. It is Soviet moves in the Middle East and the Mediterranean and Soviet warnings on Berlin that determine Western expectations about possible future crises. For the Soviets are, consciously and consistently, using the détente to promote their solution of the conflict.

4. - Goals and Means of Soviet Policy

The two basic goals of Soviet policy in Europe have remained unchanged for many years. They are the consolidation of the Soviet power sphere, including the universal acceptance of the present East German régime as legitimate and permanent, and the dissolution of Nato and particularly of the alliance between the United States and Western Germany, which Moscow regards as the only potential threat to its security in the West. These goals have both a defensive motivation and an offensive significance, because their combined fulfilment would leave the Soviets in control of Eastern Europe up to the Elbe while Western Europe was denuded of American protection: the result would be Soviet predominance on the whole European continent, with obvious consequences for the world balance of power.

From 1958 up to the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, the Soviets sought to achieve these goals by threatening pressure on the exposed Western position in Berlin: Khrushchev believed that the new vulnerability of the U.S. to Soviet intercontinental rockets would enable him to force the Western powers either to abandon that position or to negotiate its future with the East German régime, and that the demoralizing effect of such a retreat on West Germany would break up the alliance. This strategy was only abandoned when the Cuban confrontation finally convinced the Soviet leaders that their strength was not sufficient for such a breakthrough.

After an interval of cautious consolidation, Khrushchev's successors have since 1965 resumed their pursuit of the same goals, but at first by radically different means: they have combined their demand for universal recognition of the status quo in Europe, including recognition of the present East German régime, with the proposal to replace the confrontation of opposing military alliances in Europe by an all-inclusive "European Security system" which would guarantee that status quo. Instead of seeking to force the breakup of Nato by threats, they have sought to promote its spontaneous disintegration, with a view to the 1969 deadline for its dissolution or renewal, by offering the parallel dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the alternative of the "European Security system." This offer was clearly geared to the encouragement of the widespread European desire for ending the partition of the continent and the military presence of both super-powers, and particularly of the French pursuit of a "European Europe." It was formally adopted by the Bucharest conference of the Warsaw Pact in July 1966, within a few weeks of the French decision to leave the

integrated military organization of Nato and on the eve of General de Gaulle's visit to the Soviet Union.

In fact, however, the Soviets are not convinced that they would be able to maintain their power sphere in Eastern Europe, and the present East German régime in particular, without the right to station troops--or at least to bring them back at the call of the Communist governments concerned--as far West as the Elbe. Accordingly, the offer to dissolve the Warsaw Pact parallel with the dissolution of Nato has been preceded and followed not only by practical measures to strengthen military and political cooperation under that pact, but by the conclusion or renewal of a series of bilateral treaties among all member states of the Pact except Rumania. These treaties, including in particular the new treaties between the other member states and East Germany, bind the signatories to continue their alliance for another twenty years--regardless of any possible dissolution of the Warsaw Pact.

The decision of the Warsaw Pact states to generalize those bilateral twenty-year treaties among each other, apparently taken at their Warsaw conference of February 1967, has thus deprived the Bucharest conditional offer to dissolve the Pact of most of its substance. In fact, the offer has not been repeated in Soviet policy statements after that date, and the emphasis has shifted once again. Throughout 1967, the demands for recognition of the status quo have been addressed primarily to the new West German government, as a precondition for accepting the sincerity of its desire for a conciliation with the Soviets and their allies, and without offering anything in return. At the same time, "European Security" has come to be interpreted in Soviet statements exclusively as security against "West German militarism and revanchism." Instead of an all-round system of mutual guarantees among equal partners, the Soviets have lately begun to propagate a partial return to the joint control of the victorious powers over defeated Germany established by the Potsdam agreement in 1945, on the ground that the provisions of that agreement had been fulfilled only in Eastern, but not in Western Germany. Of course, if Western consent to such an arrangement could be obtained, it would effectively break up the present Western alliance without requiring corresponding steps on the Soviet side.

In the course of the past year, Soviet European policy has thus shown a tendency to pass once again from the tactics of tempting offers to the West, geared to the climate to détente, to the tactics of unilateral demands and of preparations for a renewal of pressure. But this change is not the only sign of growing Soviet confidence and impatience. For along with the revival of Soviet initiatives in Europe, "harder" policies of a renewal of the arms race and of expanding the Soviet power sphere on Nato's southern flank have developed for several years.

In the arms control field, the Soviets have been reasonably cooperative on the non-proliferation treaty--a subject on which their basic community of interest with the United States was recognized in advance by both sides. They have merely insisted that signatories whose civilian nuclear installations are at present controlled by Euratom must negotiate arrangements to adapt themselves to the IAEA controls within a fixed time--an issue which they may hope will create difficulties for the German Federal Republic and between the latter and the United States.

On a problem of far more direct impact on the power relation between U.S.A. and U.S.S.R., the installation of anti-ballistic missiles, the

Soviet attitude has been far less cooperative. Though it remains highly doubtful whether the Soviet government intends to go beyond the limited local installations known to exist, and though its leaders must be aware that a larger effort in this field would be bound to start a new round of the arms race and have a generally destabilizing effect on East-West relations, they have persistently avoided a commitment not to launch this larger effort. After prolonged hesitations, evasions and contradictory comments in the Soviet press, they have finally made it clear that they will not negotiate a ceiling on ABMs unless a ceiling on offensive strategic rockets is negotiated at the same time, and that their objective in such a negotiation would be the replacement of the present U.S. superiority in strategic nuclear weapons by parity. But while parity in these weapons would give the U.S. and the Soviet Union equal security against an unprovoked attack on their own territory, it would decisively reduce the credibility of the nuclear protection at present offered by the United States to its exposed allies, which forms the hard core of the Nato alliance. Soviet negotiating tactics in this field thus amount to an attempt to use the threat of a costly and destabilizing competition in ABMs as a means to exert pressure on Washington in order to deprive the alliance of its military substance.

Finally, while being notably wary of new commitments in other underdeveloped areas, Khrushchev's successors have steadily increased the Soviet Union's political, economic and military stake in the Middle East. They have continued their political support--both from outside and through the local Communists--and their economic and military aid for the revolutionary nationalist régimes of Egypt and Algeria (undeterred in the latter case by the overthrow of Ben Bella). They have offered massive aid to the left-wing Syrian government formed in early 1966, and have made its rise the occasion for coming out publicly for the creation of a bloc of "liberated" Arab countries in close cooperation with the Soviet bloc. They have used the troubled situation in Cyprus both to support Makarios's ambitions as an alternative to union with Greece, and to foment Turkey's dissatisfaction with her Nato allies. They have sought to improve their relations with both Turkey and Iran and offered them economic aid in an effort to loosen their ties with the Western alliance. And they have accompanied this whole effort both with a growing propaganda campaign against the presence of the American Sixth Fleet in the Eastern Mediterranean, and with a steady and rapid increase in the number of warships from their own Black Sea Fleet detached for duty in Mediterranean waters. In short, the Middle East is the one region of the Third World in which the Soviets have clearly advanced from a mere "strategy of denial" contesting the West's former monopoly of control, to a deliberate policy of installing themselves as the predominant power--and this policy has begun to pose a new threat to Nato's Mediterranean flank.

The Soviet role in the Middle Eastern war of June 1967 and its aftermath must be seen in this context. The Soviets certainly did not want or even foresee that war, but their fear of a possible collapse of the Syrian régime following the Israeli retaliation for Syrian raids led them to push the Egyptians into a policy of "preventive" mobilization which eventually brought on the war. Again, the post-war replacement of the Arabs' lost war material was intended to stabilize the shaken pro-Soviet régimes, not to bring about a further round of fighting, and it seems to have been actually followed by counsels of moderation with regard to new guerilla raids. But now as before, the Soviet interest is in maintaining a state of Arab hostility to Israel rather than in

promoting a negotiated solution to the conflict: the Soviet position in the region continues to depend on that hostility.

No more than Soviet arms policy, then, does Soviet Middle Eastern policy fit into a concept of détente as a stage on the road to the replacement of conflict by cooperation: like the former, it reflects a steady effort to shift the balance of power against the West, which has also become increasingly apparent in Soviet European policy. As for the decision of Khrushchev's successors to re-engage in the Vietnam conflict, from which he had effectively withdrawn, by means of supplies of advanced weapons, it was probably originally due in part to the need to compete more effectively against Chinese influence among the Communists of East and Southeast Asia, and in part to the wish to deter American attacks on North Vietnam. But with the development of a massive American military commitment in Vietnam in general and of the air attacks on the North in particular, the Soviets were faced with the decision whether to concentrate on diplomatic efforts to end the war in the interest of overall détente, or to regard its continuation chiefly as a drain on American power and prestige that might be useful to their own world position. Here, too, the decision seems to have gone increasingly in the latter direction.

5. - The Course of Western Policies

The lack of a common Western policy towards the Soviet bloc makes it necessary here to trace the main outlines of the separate policies at least of the three Western states most active in that field--the United States, France, and the German Federal Republic--and of their interaction.

a. - The United States, under President Kennedy, entered the détente without a detailed plan for negotiating a solution of the central problems of the East-West conflict, but with the definite intention to use the détente to make these questions negotiable. It was hoped to follow up the sobering effect of the Caribbean crisis on the Soviets by inducing them to cooperate in arms control agreements, beginning with the test ban; to deepen the consciousness of the new threat from Communist China and the common interest of the "mature" powers in containing it on the Soviet side; and to lower the barriers between the two "camps" by the systematic improvement of economic and cultural relations among their members, which would further loosen the formerly rigid and exclusive ties between the Soviet bloc countries. In this way, the political preconditions for an active negotiation of the more difficult problems of a European settlement would be created.

The United States had expected to keep its own alliance reasonably intact during this process, despite the already visible disagreements with France. But the high priority it assigned to bilateral arms control negotiations with Russia in general and to nuclear non-proliferation in particular involved it almost at once in conflicts with its own allies: first the Nassau agreement with Britain led to the sharpest French attack yet on American "hegemony", and then the U.S. reacted to the French proclamation of an independent "European" policy and to the simultaneous signature of the Franco-German treaty by pushing the project of a "multilateral nuclear force"--a project that was intended to preserve political unity at least among the other leading Nato powers but proved divisive among them as well. Moreover the Bonn government, which gave the MLF-project the most positive reception, was under Dr. Adenauer most reluctant in endorsing the new détente policy in general and the nuclear test ban treaty in particular.

The new Johnson administration, faced with the growing difficulty of finding European partners for a common policy of détente, soon dropped not only the MLF-project, but lost active interest in using the détente for a constructive initiative in European affairs. This attitude deepened as the imminent threat of a collapse of the South Vietnamese régime, perceived in Washington as linked to a major expansionist drive by Communist China, led to a shift of American priorities from the European to the Asian and Pacific theater and from the comparatively quiescent conflict with Moscow to the apparently more acute confrontation with Peking. This shift of priorities expressed itself not only in the growing pressure for troop withdrawals from Europe, but in a tendency to ignore the increasing deliveries of Soviet armaments to North Vietnam, to hope for eventual Soviet help in inducing a less intransigent attitude on the part of Hanoi, and therefore to regard the preservation of the climate of détente with Moscow as valuable in itself, independent of Soviet behavior in Europe or elsewhere or even in the arms race.

In this context, General de Gaulle's efforts for a Franco-Soviet rapprochement in general, and his 1966 decision to leave the integrated military organization of the North Atlantic Pact on the eve of his state visit to Russia in particular, were felt in Washington primarily not as a further weakening of the Western alliance, but as a competitive move to disturb the bilateral contacts between the two super-powers. With his speech of October 7, 1966, President Johnson responded by returning to a more active pursuit of East-West détente in Europe, but now linking it with an explicit assertion that the existing Eastern and Western alliances should "provide a framework in which East and West can act together to assure the security of all." Together with his proposal for "a gradual and balanced revision in force levels on both sides," this amounted to an explicit option for using the détente only to lower the risks, burdens and barriers of the East-West conflict in the framework of the existing opposing alliances under the leadership of the two super-powers, rather than for trying to transcend this framework by seeking to prepare the ground for a European settlement. American policy is thus striving to prevent a deterioration of the European status quo with a minimum of military and diplomatic effort, not to explore ways for an improvement by new initiatives.

In other fields, the United States has so far confined itself to reacting to rising Soviet pressures piecemeal without seriously questioning their compatibility with the overall climate of détente. Thus it has rejected the Soviet bid for parity in strategic nuclear weapons and replied to increased Soviet efforts in missile installation by pushing its program for multiple independent re-entry vehicles. It has maintained its Sixth Fleet in the Eastern Mediterranean and thus effectively deterred the Soviets from direct military intervention in the Middle Eastern war of June 1967, but it has silently accepted the growing activity of a Soviet fleet in those waters and would have been effectively deterred itself from intervening if the war had brought a victory of the Soviet-armed Arabs. Subsequently, it has effectively opposed the Soviet effort to achieve a one-sided condemnation of Israel by the United Nations, and has obtained a measure of Soviet cooperation in preventing an immediate new flare-up, but it has silently accepted the massive rearmament and political penetration of the "progressive" Arab states by the Soviets. It has thus set limits to the new Soviet advances, but has lacked either the strength or the will to stop them altogether.

b. - France: The French government of General de Gaulle saw in the

détente at once the danger of a Russo-American understanding on the permanent domination of a divided Europe and the chance of creating a new European settlement which would make both the opposing alliances and the physical presence of their leading powers in the heart of the continent superfluous. While aware that any new type of European security system would require both American and Russian guarantees to prevent one-sided domination and to contain a possibly re-united Germany, the French president seems to have assumed from the outset that the United States would be more opposed than the Soviet Union to any replacement of the existing alliances, and that the diplomatic preparation for the desired change would therefore have to be accomplished in contact with the Soviets but without and to some extent against the United States. A Britain wedded to its "special relationship" with the U.S. was equally considered an opponent of the French vision of a "European Europe," while Federal Germany, because of its vital interest in overcoming the German partition, appeared as France's natural supporter on the new road.

French détente policy thus started logically with the 1963 veto against British entry into the Common Market and with the simultaneous conclusion of a treaty of friendship with the Federal Republic. But West German opinion did not agree in seeing Washington as the main obstacle to any long-term change in the European status quo, nor in regarding close and confident cooperation with Washington as dispensable for its short-term security. The resulting divergence, borne in on the French first by the Bundestag preamble to the Treaty, then by German support for the MLF-project and finally by the replacement of Dr. Adenauer as chancellor, led de Gaulle in the following years to pursue his rapprochement with the Soviets as a priority task, in isolation from his NATO allies and with a deliberate stress on those issues where he agreed with the Soviets rather than with the former. In particular, he offered to mediate in the Vietnam conflict in 1964 and later sharply condemned the U.S. decision for direct military intervention; he agreed with the Soviets in opposing both the MLF and any alternative scheme that would give Germany access to nuclear weapons in any form; and he made a point of stressing his known support for the finality of Poland's Western frontiers. This policy reached its culmination in 1966 with France's departure from the military organization of the Atlantic alliance and with de Gaulle's state visit to Russia, when France began to show a marked tendency to subordinate even its improved relations with other East European states to the priority of good relations with Moscow.

However, the search for Franco-Russian agreement on a new European settlement met an obstacle in the rigid Soviet commitment to the maintenance of the Soviet power sphere, including an unchanged East German régime dependent on Soviet military support, on one side, and in the French interest in an inner-European balance that could one day be maintained without the American presence on the other. For the French perceived clearly that such a balance would both require the willing cooperation of the West-Germans and be incompatible with the presence of Soviet forces on the Elbe. For both reasons, France has continued to refuse diplomatic recognition of the East German régime and to keep the Federal Government carefully informed about her Eastern diplomacy, at the same time encouraging and supporting all West German moves in a similar direction.

After the formation of a new Bonn government committed to an active improvement of relations with Eastern Europe, this has permitted a marked revival of Franco-German cooperation, which has even survived the tensions created by the opposite attitude of both countries to the

renewed British bid for entry into the EEC. Undeterred by the new hardening of Soviet policy on the German question, France is at the same time supporting the new Bonn diplomacy in the member states of the Soviet bloc and taking the initiative in joint Franco-German studies of possible models for overcoming the partition of Europe and Germany. While the recent draft of a French study group on this subject may have little chance of proving acceptable to either Bonn or Moscow, and need not be considered an expression of settled French policy, its acceptance as a basis for inter-governmental Franco-German discussions is symptomatic of the common interest of both countries in patiently exploring all avenues towards a major change in the European system.

Meanwhile, the development of an independent French nuclear capability has had remarkably little impact on East-West relations. After loud initial protests, the Soviets have preferred to ignore it as the Franco-Soviet rapprochement on current political questions proceeded. The French withdrawal from Nato's military organization, apart from increasing France's diplomatic freedom of manoeuvre, seems to have mainly served the purpose of reinsuring France against a possible involvement in the escalation of East-West conflicts originating outside Europe. In that sense it is linked with the French attempts to play the role of mediator in Vietnam and in the Middle Eastern war. While the former attempt failed because the Americans were too heavily committed to accept negotiation at the given time, the latter showed that the super-powers require no mediator if both are determined to limit their involvement in a dangerous crisis. The repeated failure of such efforts and the growing rigidity of the Soviet attitude to European problems make it improbable that the new French strategic doctrine of all-round defense will have concrete political effects, and permit the assumption that failing tangible alternatives, France may be willing in 1969 to renew her membership in the Atlantic alliance, at least provisionally and in a suitably loose form.

c. - Germany: It may be said that the Federal Republic, because of its vital interest in overcoming German partition, had and has more to gain from a détente that might loosen the status quo than any other Western power. Yet the Adenauer government at first interpreted détente merely as a Russo-American agreement to cement the status quo. Arguing that there should be no progress in détente without simultaneous progress in the German question, it came to be internationally regarded as the principal obstacle to a lowering of the tensions and barriers between East and West; and the damage to the international standing of the Federal Republic was compounded by its support, continued under the Erhard government, for the MLF-project, which, though in fact chiefly determined by the desire to support any consolidation of the ties of the Atlantic alliance, was widely interpreted abroad as due to an urge to gain "a finger on the nuclear trigger."

Under the leadership of Erhard and Schroeder, West German foreign policy was primarily determined by a stubborn desire to preserve the country's sheltered existence as part of the Atlantic alliance--irrespective of the fact that this alliance no longer had a common policy. In practice, this meant that it became more one-sidedly dependent on American leadership at the very time when less American leadership was available for Europe, but also that it took a more favorable attitude towards East-West détente. Yet the efforts of Herr Schroeder in particular to make use of the climate of détente, and of the attraction of West Germany's economic strength, to improve her relations with the East European states and diminish their fear of Germany, were frequently frustrated by the resistance of elements within the governing majority that were

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either opposed in principle to any dealings with the Communist world or wedded to demands for a revision of Germany's Eastern frontiers that excluded any reconciliation with her Eastern neighbors. The resulting paralysis led to Bonn's growing international isolation in the latter part of 1966, when General de Gaulle's visit to the Soviet Union and President Johnson's speech of October 7 showed the risk that West Germany might have to bear the cost of the competition among her allies for better relations with Moscow.

Meanwhile, however, the ground for a change in policy had been prepared by major changes in public opinion, beginning with the memorandum on German-Polish reconciliation published by the German Evangelical Church in October 1965. The reception of that memorandum showed how far the hold of the irreconcilable nationalists on the electorate had been reduced to a fringe phenomenon, and this enabled the social democratic opposition as well as a growing section of the governing Christian Democrats to free themselves from their pressure. By the time the Erhard government was replaced by the "grand coalition" of these two leading parties under Kiesinger and Brandt in early December, a new Eastern policy had become possible. The government declaration expressed the desire for full diplomatic relations with all the Communist states of Eastern Europe in a spirit of reconciliation. It unambiguously accepted the nullity of the Munich agreement of 1938. It left the final settlement of the German-Polish frontier to a future peace treaty, but expressed understanding for the Polish desire for security and no longer mentioned the "legal basis" of the frontiers of 1937. While refusing to recognize the East German government as representative and legitimate, the declaration also offered to deal with this government on any level in order to obtain practical improvement for the human, economic and cultural contacts between the inhabitants of both parts of Germany.

This change of policy suddenly projected the Federal Government not only into the stream of détente, ending the danger of self-isolation, but into the center of debate within the Soviet bloc. While the Rumanian government immediately grasped the chance for full diplomatic relations and the Czech, Hungarian and Bulgarian governments at first showed a positive interest, the East German and Polish Communists at once denounced the change as hypocritical and opposed any improvement of relations so long as West Germany would not accept all the demands of the Soviet bloc, including diplomatic recognition of the East German régime and acceptance of a separate status for West Berlin. When the Soviet government, after some hesitation, came down on the side of the "hard-liners", the Czechs, Hungarians and Bulgarians had provisionally to reject the West German bid for normal diplomatic relations and to conclude bilateral twenty-year treaties with East Germany instead. The question did not, however, disappear from the international agenda: the West Germans kept their offers open, achieved a trade agreement with Czechoslovakia in August 1967 and also initiated a dialogue with the Soviets on a possible exchange of declarations renouncing the use or threat of force, not only with them but with all the members of the Soviet bloc. When the Soviets demanded that such declarations should also be exchanged with the East German government in the same form as with the others, the West Germans did not reject that principle, though the question what that form should be has not so far been solved. The net result of this new flexibility in Bonn to date has been the appearance of growing differences on the appropriate response both in the Soviet Union itself and in the bloc, with signs of increasing rigidity in Moscow and growing criticism of it notably in Czechoslovakia.

The Bonn government has not tried to influence the course of East-West relations outside Europe. Its one overriding interest in the Third World has remained to prevent the diplomatic recognition of the present East German régime by non-Communist states, and in this it has continued to be successful. Even the crisis in its relations with the Arab states which was caused some years ago first by the delivery of some German arms to Israel and then by the establishment of full diplomatic relations with that state has not led to Arab recognition of East Germany, and Bonn has been careful to stay strictly neutral in the Middle Eastern war. The detached understanding shown by West Germany for the American predicament in Vietnam is almost as far removed from active support as from the public criticism of U.S. policy by General de Gaulle.

The one other question on which Bonn's attitude is of potential importance for East-West relations is the non-proliferation treaty. While no responsible West German leader is interested in national control of nuclear weapons, and the Bonn government has no desire to obstruct the treaty, it feels obliged to safeguard German interests on some specific points and felt insufficiently consulted in the early stages of negotiation. Of those specific points, the West German concern for influence on Nato--or rather American--nuclear strategy has to be taken care of outside the treaty negotiations within the appropriate planning committee of the alliance. The wish to keep open the "European option" has been formally met in the treaty text for the improbable case of a fully federated West European state. Differences remain on the problems of the duration of the treaty and the possibilities of revision, but the most important issue for West Germany is an economic one--to make sure that the necessary inspection procedure will not expose German reactor technique to the eyes of competitors. The precise form in which the inspection procedure of Euratom is to be adapted to that of IAEA remains therefore a cause of potential trouble. Yet it would appear that the decisive political factors in the Federal Republic are aware that a refusal to sign the treaty, or even a prolonged reluctance, could do much more harm to its national interest than the treaty itself could possibly cause.

6. - Some Conclusions

What emerges from the course of Western policies during the years of détente is on one side a hard core of continuing common interests that is more substantial than it could at times appear, on the other a basic division concerning the degree of readiness to take risks for the sake of attempting to overcome the East-West conflict in Europe.

On the side of common interests, the need for maintaining a balance of power against the Soviet Union is accepted by all Western governments, including that of General de Gaulle, though there are marked differences about the amount of efforts and sacrifices required for that purpose. Recognition of the desirability of lowering the risks and burdens of the arms competition and of reducing the barriers dividing East and West by the promotion of economic and cultural exchanges has become equally general, notwithstanding substantial disagreements on the prospects of particular forms of arms control. Finally, the principle that under any alternative security system, the guarantees against an uncontrolled increase in German military strength in general and against the possibility of German nuclear arms in particular should be no weaker than under the present system of opposing alliances, is agreed by all concerned, including the Germans themselves.

The basic division in the West, on the other hand, is between the

preference for maintaining the existing alliances at a reduced level of cost and effort, shared by the United States, Britain and some of the smaller Western countries (including both Nato members and neutral states deriving benefits from Nato's existence), and the preference for replacing those alliances by a new type of all-round security system ending the partition of Europe and reducing the super-powers to the role of guarantors from a distance, the principal exponent of which is France. The peculiarity of the intermediate position of the Federal Republic is that the latter shares the French preference for a basic change, but not the French belief that such a change could, should or need be achieved against American and British resistance. The German view is, on the contrary, that the hardest resistance against a real solution of European problems will continue to come from the Soviets, and that it will not be possible to overcome it without American and British support. This gives the Federal Republic in the present phase a special interest in seeking to reconcile the views of its allies not only for reasons of its immediate security, but also as a precondition for achieving its long-range aim of a change in Eastern Germany.

As the hardening of Soviet policy and the partial success of Soviet efforts to change the balance of power makes both the preservation of détente at a low level of effort and the achievement of constructive change by the isolated action of France appear increasingly unlikely, the chances of such a reconciliation of Western policies may eventually improve.
